Plan C meets Plan A

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/29379213.

Rating:
General Audiences

Archive Warning:
Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Category:
Gen

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationship:
Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku & Tsukauchi Naomasa, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic

Character:
Midoriya Izuku, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Midoriya Inko, Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Tsukauchi Naomasa

Additional Tags:
Parental Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Dadzawa - An Aizawa Shota Zine, BAMF Midoriya Izuku, Good Parent Midoriya Inko, Quirkless Midoriya Izuku, Protective Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Protective Tsukauchi Naomasa, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead Adopts Midoriya Izuku, Analyst Midoriya Izuku, Smart Midoriya Izuku, Genius Midoriya Izuku

Language:
English

Series:
Part 1 of The Hero's Consultant (Son), Part 1 of Dadzawa and Problem Child Works

Collections:
Dad Vibes, Izuku doesn't need One for All, Tales of Class 1-A, Deku Has A Brain, BNHA Recommendations, good short fics to read when u can’t sleep, Bnha Bookclub Discord Recs, 🌱 Izuku and his

emotional support dads □, BNHA BEST SHORT STORIES TO EVER GRACE THE INTERNET, Bnha titles that were definitely worth my sleepless nights, Best of BNHA, Creative Chaos Discord Recs, Works Loved By Luna04, Bnha fics that carved out a place in my brain, phoenix's my hero academia - best fics, BNHA Treasure Box, ilyroki's reread list, □Izuku and his Collection of Dads□, Got 99 problems but these ain't one, bnha fics i dream about 🌙, Void's BNHA Favorites :D, its-yaboijojo Read Later/Favorites, Rain Recs, Dadzawa, hereBeGems, misc favourite fic, Pthaloteal, fuck canon all my homies hate canon, Quirkless, Lina_Miramel's Fav BNHA Canon Divergence, The Last Rec List, Absolute Favorites, Lex's Favorite BNHA Fics ٩(●ˇ▿ˇ●)۶, best bnha fics i've had the privilege of reading, Se eu perde-las, Deku's Dads, Fics that soothe my soul at 4am, Quality Fics, bumblebee's fav BNHA fics! :-D, Aizawa and Izuku Mentor-Parent Fics, Purple Archivist: Read and Read Again, thiccboimork's reading list, Genius Midoriya Izuku, BNHA For the Soul ❤□, Finished Fics (bnha), 📚 Fanfic Forum Discord Recs, Stories that are completed, No_ofa_roundhurrr, Izuku's Dads, Smart™ Izuku, Bug's Fav MHA Fics, ☆□My Hero Stories Worth Your Time☆□, great fics from all fandoms :), the perfect fic doesn't exi-, gothelixar recs, Mei the Fic be With You, A Picky Vest's Favorites, Complete fics I want to read (Nightowls), Alicia's idea of good fics, Fanfics that Would be Best-Sellers if They Were Published Books, Wolfis MyHeroAcademia Library, Green Bean & Co, Flower Dragon's Recommendation, Plus Ultra! MHA Fics, ✧Chris's Best Izuku Fics✧, You haven't lived if you haven't read this, Typsy's Dragon Hoard, 99NicelyFinishedFics, Flashfreeze Recs, Leannic Recs, Great Fics i Want To Re Read, Jwllz Favorite BNHA Fics (Completed Works), traumastudents, Shady BNHA Faves (Including Crossovers), Best Stories, Favs mesmo, I will cry about these (bnha), ✧I don't have a personal life✧, !!!!!, Worth It BNHA Fanfics Reading List - Completed, Leymonaide fic recs, My Hero Academia Stories, Works So Good Id Physically Buy the Hard Cover Version in Stores, Like A Favorite Sweater, Bnha fics that give me a reason to live™ <3, hixpatch's all time favorites, My Fav BNHA Complete Works, 4376(HERO), My hero academia, the reason i'm an insomniac, Fics I've read so you should too, Re-read a thousand times, The Witch's Woods, Best of MHA, MHA Izuku's mind games and general feralness □, MHA dadzawa or dadmic and their zero-regrets family □, 10/10 would re-read bnha, Martian's Delights, mha fics, Midoriya Izuku fics, (mostly) just some funky lil Izu fics, *+.｡·*♡The Favoured Ones♡*·｡.+*, My daddy issues and Dadzawa, I live for Deku (and Class 1-A), Boku no Hero Academia Fanfics, Eatbook's Cherished and wanting more All Fandoms, From the Vault, 👌□

good shit, Purrsonal Picks, BaNHAmmer, Lux's fav fics, Myra_Approved_Version_of_Midoriya_Izuku, BNHAFanfics, flofli's collection of read mha fics <3, I need a good parental figure [read: Dadzawa] in my life, God-Tier Short Fics and Oneshots, Best Adoption Fics, Dadzawa Soup for The Soul (TiaLee), Izu is a chaos gremlin and/or maybe adopts everyone (TiaLee), Hira's Dragon Hoard of Precious Fics, Fics_I_would_be_willing_to_sacrifice_my_sleep_to_read_again, My Favorite MHA Works, Alina'sfavoritebnhafics!, dadzawa_papamic, Sk1tats, kip's bnha library, mha fics that are my will to live, Completed but marked for later, Magnolia's Favourite Fics, Mays My Villain Academia, Raviels_Libary, Izuku ❤, raes unread fics (no specific fandom) woah, rae keeping track of her BNHA fics?!??!? woah, Selected Best Reads, Mha fics That are Geva approved & recommended, Vallawares, Seul's Favorite BNHA Fics, Hidden Jewels, Polished Gems, My Hero Academia, under penalty of death, how delightfully unexpected

Stats:

Published: 2021-02-12 Completed: 2021-02-27 Words: 16,532 Chapters: 5/5

Plan C meets Plan A

by Blueseabird2

Summary

Even if All Might is right and Izuku can't be a hero, Izuku refuses to be useless. So Izuku uses his analysis skills to develop Plan C: Consulting in order to help the heroes. Eraserhead is impressed by this mysterious new consultant but alarm bells in Deku's behaviour quickly have Aizawa recruiting help for Plan A: Adoption.

Notes

Hello! I have most of this written out in one form or another so updates shouldn't be too long in arriving. I hope you enjoy!

Update: numberth created art of Izuku at his desk! It's absolutely lovely; please go look here!

Plan C: Consulting

Everything started with an email.

The email wasn't Izuku's. He shouldn't have even known the email existed, much less read the message so many times that he could recite the contents backwards. He didn't even know why he'd picked up the printed email in the first place. (That was a lie. Izuku had picked it up partly because his Mom had taught littering was bad, partly because it was on the ground by a hero fight, and mostly because he'd seen a hero agency insignia on the paper.)

The email was clearly important and full of confidential information. Izuku might have even felt guilty about reading it (probably not enough to stop), except the information was now virtually irrelevant.

Windmeister, a new and flashy villain who controlled devastating winds, had been captured right in front of Izuku's eyes that morning. The email, folded twice and stained with dirt in the form of several shoe prints, was a now outdated plan on how to complete that capture. Well, not a full plan, more the seeds of a full plan. Lists of likely characteristics of Windmeister's quirk. Explanations of the sounds she made and conjecture on how those sounds controlled her winds. Ideas on how to disrupt both sounds and winds.

In short, the email contained research. Analysis. Investigation and reasoning just like in Izuku's Analysis Notebooks.

Here was someone, presumably an adult, doing what Izuku was already doing and getting paid. Here was someone, presumably a professional, doing what Izuku was already doing and getting recognized. Here was someone, presumably hero-adjacent, doing what Izuku was already doing and *helping other people.*

And, as far as he could tell, at the same skill level. (That was a lie. Izuku was better. Izuku had less resources, less training, less access, but he also had five more pages in his notebooks that talked about structural damage, Windmeister's clicking shoes, and weather correlations.)

Izuku was intrigued.

Izuku had almost stopped his analysis. Why work on Hero Analysis for the Future when he couldn't be a hero? All Might wasn't wrong. His mom wasn't wrong. Being a hero was dangerous with a quirk, even more so without one.

Regular life without a quirk was dangerous, and he had plenty of support from online quirkless chats and message boards to back up that fact. It wasn't just Izuku. All quirkless people faced bullying and prejudice and discrimination for existing. Who was he to think that he could handle the danger of his own quirkless life (which he already couldn't, if the burns arcing up back had anything to suggest) with added regular villain encounters?

So he'd gone back to school after his second run-in with the sludge-villain, after being told off by three separate Pro-heroes for saving Kacchan while they'd stood and watched. It was a sudden decision, a sharp right turn on his path home, but Izuku had found himself standing over the school pond in dying orange light, holding his Notebook over the water with trembling hands.

If Kacchan was right and he'd never be a hero, only a quirkless loser, then it seemed fitting that Kacchan be right about the fate of his Hero Analysis Notebook, too.

Izuku dropped the Notebook, but not intentionally, because that would have been far to easy. The trembling in his hand had only gotten worse through two villain encounters and all that *fear*. A sudden sharp spasm of pain had his fingers clenching and releasing, spilling the Notebook to the dry ground a foot in front of the pond.

It fell open to All Might's signature, and Izuku stared a moment before looking away. His eyes caught, however on the page next to the name of his hero: a half-finished analysis of Mt. Lady, started before his day had really gone to shit.

He crouched down, shaking hand extended to pick up the book, and ended up staring again, this time at his hand. There was blood under his nails, brackish and dark, from where he'd scratched at the sludge-villain's arm or face. Bruises, soon to be thick and purple but currently faint and oddly patterned, were starting to creep over his knuckles and wrap around his wrist.

And the smell. Now that he'd noticed, the smell of sewer-dank-rot clung to his skin and worked into his lungs, stealing the air he'd only just gotten back.

By the time he went to bed that night the moon was starting to go down, his mom's light had long been off, and he had twelve pages of tight, cramped analysis on the sludge villain.

Izuku was breathing through ink scratched into damaged pages. The slight sweet scent of Kacchan's explosions and washed-out soot soothed the tremble in his hands with every sentence he wrote.

Izuku had written about why the villain needed a person, how he took over, what he could do once in a meat suit. Izuku theorized on methods of confirming if the villain had taken someone over, and how to expunge him from both a living and dead body. Izuku had thought about the consistency of the sludge, trying to pinpoint if it was more of a natural mud or simply a liquefaction of the villain's own body. Izuku considered why a bottle could hold the villain, and what other containers would work and be more effective.

Izuku came up with plans and procedures of what he would do if he ran into the villain again, however unlikely that might be.

In the morning, with Kacchan's frightened eyes winding though half-remembered dreams and purple bruises tracking up his arms, Izuku stared at his notebook: hero analysis before All Might's signature, a villain analysis after.

And Izuku didn't stop.

He didn't stop his analysis at one villain. He didn't stop at analyzing their powers and skills. He didn't stop once he'd found the perfect hero matchup.

He stopped when he could think of no more ways for the villain to be defeated, handled, mitigated.

All Might was right. His mom was right. Being a hero was dangerous, especially for a kid without a quirk. But Kacchan wasn't right. The kids at school weren't right.

He wasn't *useless.*

He didn't stop (not when the muttered words and the scratched pages were the only way he could remember to breathe).

Izuku took a week off of analyzing villains after he found the email.

One week to research the researchers.

He found consultants. An entire profession of people paid to help heros help people by analyzing both villains and heroes.

Izuku was fascinated.

Consultants were different from analysts in that they didn't work with an agency, but were instead contracted from outside. A lot of them even worked remotely, from a distance, and communicated mainly through email or other online forums.

Which had potential.

The vetting process on consultants wasn't nearly as strict as it was for heroes. In fact, it barely existed. Many agencies had their own analysts, at least the larger ones did, so consultants got shuffled into an odd grey area.

Basically, if a hero or agency needed outside help, they were responsible for their own back-checking. Which was a sound enough policy, if only most agencies, particularly the smaller ones, weren't only using consultants because they were some combination of overworked, overwhelmed, and under-qualified.

Izuku had gone on a tangent, one only lasting about twenty hours (four of which were spent sleeping; his bruises were gone but still his hands trembled), and dove into the requirements for heroes. While most hero schools, UA at the forefront, prized analysis and taught a class or two about how to judge their opponents, that was the sum total. Again, the grey area seemed to declare that if a hero got their license, then they were competent enough to analyze their surroundings and foes and react accordingly.

Which wasn't true. At all.

Izuku had gone on another tangent, this one lasting about a week, and researched heroes. Not specific heroes, as had been his main habit before his descent into villain-analysis, but the industry as a whole. He'd never thought overly much about the industry before, only glossed over those details when imaging himself joining their ranks while being far too focused on individual fights.

He found that young heroes died rather frequently, according to multiple sets of statistics. They either died or they got help. Many worked with large name agencies, like the Endeavour Agency

(Endeavour had a whole notebook to himself that was one of three that sat out of order in a locked drawer of Izuku's desk only marked with a mental note of 'later'). These young heroes had resources and extra training and a variety of professionals right there to offer help whether they wanted it or not.

Hero schools were surprisingly proactive for their graduates, often presenting a framework of resources young heroes could use until they got settled. It wasn't enough. The heroes who were good and not great, the heroes who didn't have flashy quirks, the heroes who had 'villainous' quirks had a much harder time getting settled safely.

So they used outside help and information. They just didn't always have the time or resources to properly vet said information. While, the Hero Commission did certify several large consulting firms, these were large firms. Large firms were expensive and didn't always (ever) deal well with little guys or newcomers.

Which led to Independents. Independent consultants were what captivated Izuku. They were what he spent four days and nights delving deeply into, trying to understand. They were his best option.

Because most independents consultants weren't retired heroes, most of them didn't have the backing of the Commission, and most of them had no stated qualifications.

What they had was a Name. A name and a reputation. Izuku could *make* those.

He started with Endeavour Agency. Well, not just Endeavour Agency, but several agencies that employed or were headed by top fifty heroes. He didn't succeed with them, and didn't really expect to, but he wanted to know how they'd react. He wanted a baseline for the worst (ie. Endeavour Agency) as context to determine how successful the other responses actually were.

It had taken only two weeks to gather information and analyze a series of incidents or villains that Izuku knew were current. It wasn't like he had to start from scratch, he just had to pick out a few names from his most recent analysis notebook and dig into a few Newspaper articles or hero forums to figure out which heroes were the connected to the case.

Or which heroes should be connected. The facts that Kamui Woods was looking into Firework while Endeavour was chasing Waterwhip was just outright baffling. While Izuku was a firm believer in planning

and thinking beats all, any elementry-aged Pokemon player could explain the basic shortfalls of that particular lineup.

Regardless, Izuku had five folders full of his best analysis. Three on specific villains, one on gang activity, and one on a car-repair shop he knew was a front.

He sent variations of each folder to twenty different agencies and heroes. That was what the second week of research had been for; to research the various different specialties and case loads. He didn't simply send the file, but bits of information that would be most useful. For example, Endevor's agency got a breakdown of Waterwhip's abilities and known associates, while Best Jeanist's agency got a breakdown of Waterwhip's targets mapped out over both time and space, since the villain was mainly targeting high end stores within Best Jeanist's patrol routes.

Izuku stared at his whiteboard, recently scavenged from a second hand store, and studied the replies he'd gotten. There were ten. Ten replies out of twenty agencies was much better than he'd been expecting.

With a still trembling hand, he smoothed out the last printed email and attached the response to his board with tape. He then took several moments to write on neon green sticky notes for the agencies that had ignored him entirely.

The responses were colour-coded, instead of being grouped in categories like positive or negative. He'd had this board arranged since even before he'd sent out his first packet of information. He chosen twenty agencies, fourteen daylight, six underground, ten well-known, ten small-time or just starting out. Ten to higher agents or actual heroes, five to tip lines, and five to newbies or low-key analysts.

This wasn't a blind draw. Izuku needed to know who was going to take him seriously.

The answer was that most didn't, which wasn't surprising since Izuku didn't have a reputation yet. He also hadn't been sure where to start building one. That was what the board was for and, honestly, the board made his next steps quite clear.

Three were standard 'Thanks for the tip, civilian, we have it all under control' automatic responses, all from daylight agencies. Two were negative, coated in arrogance and disparaging the need for any help,

also from daylight agencies. One was down-right rude, demanding Izuku's source and accusing him of being an accomplice, from, surprise, a daylight agency.

One was vitriolic. He could have technically included it in either the negative/arrogant category or the rude category, since it was both. But. Well. It was the only response not taped to his board. Izuku had read it carefully, highlighted several key phrases, then unlocked his drawer, removed Endeavour's notebook from atop Kacchan's, and placed both the notebook and the printed email in a new folder before returning it to the 'Later' drawer and tucking the key back around his neck.

The cheap metal felt hot against his collar bone.

It took a special kind of agency to hire analysts with such cruelty in them. To encourage speaking to someone who'd been offering help and advice, even if was unwanted, in such a fashion. Izuku hadn't been part of the workforce, but he'd seen his mom struggling under an awful boss several years prior, and had enough memories of teachers looking past his literally bleeding skin to know that work culture was crucial. And the culture at Endeavour's agency appeared to be coated in toxic smoke.

So that was ten absent responses, thirteen when including the useless auto-replies, and four overwhelmingly negative. Three were left, none from daylight heroics.

Three were *positive*.

Izuku grinned, more sharply than his classmates likely knew he could.

One had been from a young sidekick with a non-offensive quirk a few years out of school, new to the underground heroics. She'd been tentative, but grateful.

One had been from a police detective who'd been passed the information during a raid. He'd been cautious but respectful, treating Izuku like a well-informed CI.

The last had been the underground hero Eraserhead. He'd been brusque, but *complimentary*. (Izuku had fanboyed for a least ten minutes. He may have also printed two of Eraserhead's response so he could fold the second up really small to stick in the lining of his wallet.)

Izuku couldn’t stop (not when typed thanks and gruff acknowledgement wrapped around his wrists where bruises had been and held the trembling at bay).

Consulting isn't Vigilantism

Chapter Summary

> Deku gets some recognition and accidentally (sort of) builds an information network.

Chapter Notes

> The response to this has been amazing! Thank you! Chapter 3 will be Aizawa.

Everything escalated with a present. Well, several presents.

Izuku was smart, despite what his mediocre grades might say, and Deku was clever, according to what the underground seemed to say, but neither he nor his consultant persona knew how to hack. He'd never learned, too busy studying heroes and villains, which made him an excellent analyst and a decent consultant, and this left him with his first problem.

Security.

It turns out, the underground *talked.* Several weeks after Izuku had first really started putting his work out there, and he was *known.* For all that daylight heroes had the attention of civilians, the underground heroes had a communication network that put gossiping housewives to shame.

Bubble Girl, the young sidekick who'd responded so happily to Izuku's first consult, had told her superiors, and then her next superiors when the first ones fired her (Izuku had immediately followed up with an expose on the sexual harassment tendencies of her first boss, helping to restore Bubble Girl's reputation and taking down Izuku's first corrupt hero).

Detective Tsukauchi, the police officer who'd received Izuku's first consult by accident, set an alert for his entire station to bring tips from Deku to him. The Detective took each and every tip seriously after a simple takedown had gone belly up when a gang member managed to summon several rarely seen higher ups during what should have been a simple drug bust (higher up's that Izuku had linked to the gang and whose quirks he'd analyzed from old videos of college kids showing off at a party).

Eraserhead had told other underground heroes. Not many, but enough that Izuku had options to send his analysis. Enough that Izuku had both a name and a reputation as Deku.

Enough that the Underground was curious.

Izuku had been cautious sending out information, using a new account he only ever accessed at the library and only ever during peak hours. And he really wasn't worried about being found out at the library. His mom was a librarian, and he'd joined her there after school ever since he was four and learned that being quirkless meant he didn't get to have friends. The library knew him and would protect him as such.

The internet had no such loyalty. Hacking was on Izuku's To Do List, it was. He was just so busy now, with school and consulting on the regular. Besides, he was helping people. Helping *heroes.* His analysis had to be perfect.

So that was problem one. The fact that Izuku now had several very smart, very information-inspired people interested in him and no way to really protect himself or his online presence. So far, he imagined the fact that they were far busier than a middle school student, secret part-time work included, was his only real salvation. Also that he wasn't a criminal.

His solution to the first problem didn't lead to the presents, not exactly. Rather, that solution just involved three weeks of intense work, computer-mapping software that didn't involve hacking, and a second whiteboard laid out with the key patrol routes, territories, and locations annotated with both police and hero schedules (there was a lot available publicly, and a lot more available to those who watched). And a pack of 100 office envelopes.

Izuku was a student. He was easily overlooked even without the years of making himself as small and unnoticeable as possible. It was very very simple to leave envelopes at various dead-drops around town without being found.

The biggest downside was the lack of response, since he didn't go back to see if anything had been left in return, and he constantly changed locations. Izuku lived for the quickly delivered praise Deku's analysis gained. (These heroes and police had no idea how their throwaway thanks or haphazard compliments wove about him, keeping the dank scent of rot and sewer from creeping around his mind on bad days.)

Lack of praise wasn't really a problem, though, but rather something

much more like Izuku's natural state of affairs. He certainly wasn't going to change his habits just to get more.

Not when he was helping people.

The second problem, the one that did lead to the presents, was the line between consultant and vigilante. It wasn't a line Izuku had any intention of crossing (All Might was right, he had no quirk, getting directly involved was dangerous). Izuku wouldn't put that kind of worry or risk on his mom. He'd never been able to put her in that kind of position, not even when he didn't have the breath-stability-net that was consulting and his desk was all but buried in spider lilies.

But, staring down at his yellow backpack clutched in white-knuckled fingers, he wondered if he knew exactly where that line was.

"Izuku, baby, I've finished locking up. Time to head home."

Izuku didn't look up. Couldn't look up from the scorched fabric that was hiding a Glock that had killed three in a local jewellery store robbery yesterday morning.

"Zuku?" He heard his mom's soft footsteps as she came in from the doorway and made her way into the ring of chairs. Hard plastic dug into his back when Izuku finally looked up, prompted by his mom's soft fingers slipping under his chin and scraping up through his hair. "Baby, what's wrong? Hard night with the Group?"

She wasn't wrong, exactly. He opened his mouth to agree, to blame it on the Group knowing she would never pry beyond that statement, but closed it as the scent of her lavender hand cream filled his nose, blocking the hints of dank-mildew and sewer-rot that had been seeping from his circling brain.

"I accidentally created a private information network out of your patrons and the community that's two parts spy work, one part clean-up crew, and one part delivery service."

Inko's hand stilled, momentarily. "How accidental?"

And doesn't his mother know the tough questions. "About forty percent? Becoming a hero consultant was intentional. As was passing information to heroes and the police and asking the Group if they had things to pass on and using various events to find more information for my analysis. The delivery part was completely unexpected." He tightened his hands on the backpack's straps.

“A consultant.” Inko sat heavily on the plastic chair next to Izuku’s, feet pointed in the empty center in the circle of chairs. She was silent a moment and Izuku could feel the weight of her gaze. “I’m so proud of you, baby.”

He whipped his head up to meet watering green eyes. “Mom?”

“You’re helping people, like you wanted. You found a way to work on your dream while keeping yourself *safe for me*. You’re helping people, you’re helping heroes, and now you’d best start from the beginning so I can best figure out how to help you.”

Izuku did. But only after they’d both stopped crying (until he cried the last of the dark-dank-mildew from his lungs).

Izuku’s mother had been the one to teach him how to research.

Inko had worked at Musutafu Public Library since Izuku was two. He’d grown up under the watchful eye of bookshelves and computer banks. There he’d learned how much information was readily available, if only one looked.

She’d taught him to navigate Government databases, despite their poor designs and clunky features. She’d taught him how to read hero Commission reports, and then to find the raw data beneath those reports. She’d taught him to never undervalue the hard to hack print resources, particularly city records and archives. She’d taught him the value of business reports, even though that took long evenings going over terminology. She’d even been the one to bring his attention to blogs, message boards, fansites, and social media, for all that Izuku had really explored those on his own.

Midoryia Inko was, in no way, surprised by her son’s ability to find and analyze information.

Not when she’d seen him pour these skills day after day into the library computers, ducking his head and hiding on third floor by the large windows to write up his notes in one of his ever-present notebooks.

The small army of spies was only a little more surprising.

Musutafu Public Library was at an intersection of affluence, meaning that it had quite a few patrons who were decently well off, but was

also very convenient for those of a lower economic status as well.

A lot of the programs that the library ran were aimed towards helping people gain a foot up in the world. The library lent out meeting space and rooms to all sorts of support groups, such as those for alcohol or drug dependency and abuse recovery. They also ran financial information meetings, had lawyers in to speak, and partnered with child care facilities and shelters in the area.

Izuku loved that side of his mother's work, and would often join her on library outreach programs.

He loved it because he was helping people, regardless of his lack of quirk. But he also loved it because there was a distinct community of 'don't ask, don't tell.'

When you can barely pay the rent for the next month or are struggling to get enough food on your child's plate, you often don't have time to worry about kicking someone else who was down.

By no means did this make everyone *friendly*. Izuku had seen his fair share of domestic disputes, drug deals, and hate attacks, both in the library and in the streets. Bullies were everywhere, particularly when you were quirkless in the rough part of town. If you avoided the assholes and the known troublemakers, however, there was a certain sense of solidarity: a mutual acknowledgement of possessing the shorter sticks.

This was especially true for Inko's quiet, quirkless son.

Inko was well known for her kind smiles, her helpful nature, and her shadow of a child. Her child who talked a lot, had tons of questions, and wanted to know everything. He also didn't go away, not really. He'd leave if someone was getting angry, flinching harshly enough to make some people pause, and disappear only to be found talking to his mother an hour or two later, surfacing from some secluded corner.

He always come back, though. Over years at the library, years at the soup kitchen down the street, years running errands for the staff and various shop keepers, people knew him. And they trusted him, to a point. They knew if he asked a question it was because he wanted an answer, not to use against someone, but to keep and think and learn.

So no, Izuku hadn't really planned to start an information network of his own, but his natural curiosity and kindness had done that for him.

The… deliberateness of the spy and delivery sides of things were both much more intentional and much more blindsiding.

Izuku was quirkless. This was highly relevant to his network, even beyond the fact that it felt like this fact defined every aspect of his being since he was four years old.

His schoolmates would certainly agree. Most of them had never met a quirkless person before, yet they still immediately knew that Izuku was less. The teachers reinforced this standing with their deliberate ignorance and casual cruelty.

Izuku had never met another quirkless person, either. It was very very uncommon, particularly in the younger generations. Uncommon, however, didn't mean non-existent, as he was living proof. So, at age ten, after a taunt from Kacchan about not being and never being Izuku's friend, Izuku went looking.

He researched.

He found several message boards, hidden and surprisingly-well protected (you didn't need a quirk to hack and Izuku should've asked for lessons), and they were enough, for awhile.

Life didn't get better, not really. He still had his homework torn and graded well below his level. He still had burns along his arms and bruises along his back. He still had hours where he couldn't stomach the thought of people and hid in quiet library alcoves.

But he also had people who legitimatized those experiences. People who had the same ones. The burden was lighter, somehow.

It was enough, until it wasn't. It was enough, until the first time his teacher (an adult who he didn't trust yet somehow still thought would be *better*) muttered under her breath that Izuku should take his classmates' advice and just disappear. It was enough, until Izuku made it home, bag dragging and ears ringing, to find that a third member of the online group had committed suicide.

He started small. Well, he started by crying long and hard at a volume that had his mom running into his room. She'd stayed with him all night, and by the time the sun rose three movies had been watched, two orders of take out had been demolished, and the Library had a new program on their books.

A support group for extreme bullying and PTSD. Registration required

and run through Midoriya Inko and Midoriya Inko alone.

It took two weeks before the first person showed up, desperation overweighing caution. The next week three people came, encouraged with confirmation by someone else on the message board agreeing that the meeting wasn't a trap, an excuse for a beatdown.

There were about twenty of them now, though only twelve or so were regulars (and three other support groups for bullying had been established at the library for PTSD because there had been *interest* and while Inko wouldn't risk her son, she certainly wasn't going to turn people *away)*.

The people of the Group weren't exactly friends. To be fair, only three of them were remotely close to Izuku's age. But they were connections. Anchors. They *understood.*

They also trusted. So when Izuku told the Group, in fits and starts with fingers tapping on hard grey plastic, that he was getting validation, that he was consulting with police and underground heroes, well, they *believed.* They'd heard his mumbles and his rants for years now, after all. They'd heard his input and suggestions about bad bosses and discrimination and bringing File XR-4 to HR and maybe the police because, no, you can't be fucking fired like that.

They didn't trust the police and the heroes to help, not without being able to tell for sure that those who were supposed to help weren't the same bigots the quirkless dealt with everyday. But they trusted Izuku to be able to tell, to do the research before hand and only deal with the best, the trustworthy.

The first time an abusive boss mentioned in Group had been arrested for extortion and smuggling had proved them right. Izuku's sunshine smile had been bladed, as he'd spoken that night, feet kicking under his industrial chair, not even meeting the wide eyes of the adults sitting with him in a circle under fluorescent library lights, detailing his week the reasons why his work experience was going oh so *well.*

Izuku left first, that night after he'd shared his first success, which was unusual, but he hadn't noticed the slow shuffling as chairs were piled in the corner, too high on *helping.* His Group, his fellow quirkless, didn't say anything once he left, but they looked at each other, nodded, and understood.

If Izuku was going to do this, and he *was doing this,* then they were, too. And so they listened. Not just to Izuku, not just in Group, but at

the walls of shitty apartments in rough areas and in jobs that weren't exactly always on the legitimate side of the table. They paid attention not just to the movements of assholes, but to the moments when discrimination was laced with cruelty. They watched out of cheap windows and if eyes were still hidden by hair then at least they weren't facing the ground. They became his eyes and ears, his information network.

It had been this boy, the youngest of them, with green curls and white burns, that had started Group. Even if some of them (most) had never thought he'd make it as a hero, thought it some holdover of optimism they couldn't bring themselves to diminish, they'd always believed him the best of them (he was already their hero, after all).

"So then Yuri passed on speaking until the end only to talk about several thefts that were taking place uptown. Which was actually super helpful because I'm working on a profile of the Grabbers for Detective Tsukauchi, and it's a dumb name but they have fascinating quirks, like most are mutant types but the leader can change the property of metal, for example he can light metal on fire or electrify it and he must have some sort of limitation even though I've never found any record of him using anything larger than a short sword. But he carries guns to send out flaming bullets and such, which is actually really cool and-" Inko put her hand on Izuku's head.

Izuku blushed, before continuing, "-right. So Yuri has a courier job and goes into the higher end of town a lot, so I just thought he was passing on some information about the Grabbers' quirks. But then Yuri pauses, and like, stares at me? And then gets up and hands me a gun - one of the Grabber's guns- and said that he was sure I'll do what needs to be done! And I get it, his courier job is hardly legal across the books and his mother is back in the hospital, but what am I supposed to do with a gun?! I can't just waltz into the station saying I found it! I have no reason, none, to be in a jewellery shop that high scale across the other side of town!

"I mean, I could lie, maybe, but Deku would be taken so much more seriously, but if I just slip the gun in one of envelopes won't that look like Vigilantism? I don't want to be a vigilante. You'd be sad and Eraserhead would be disappointed and Tsukauchi would have to arrest me and I didn't spend months researching and setting Deku up as a consultant to be arrest-"

“Zuku!”

Izuku looked at his mom through long bangs, suddenly realizing that he really needed to breathe. After a great gulping breath and a few forced mediative breaths that his mom looked way to amused to be guiding him through, he felt he’d gotten a grip on his mumbling.

“So. I have a gun from an active crime scene sitting in a plastic bag tucked into in my backpack, along with a half-finished analysis on the gunman, and a Group full of quirkless adults who seem to think I can handle the situation without being a Vigilante.”

Inko simply smiled and tucked his hair behind his ear.

So it was Izuku’d idea to solve his first problems with dead-drops, but it was his mother’s to change envelopes to actual packages, as long as they were accompanied by a well-written note of explantation. She proofread his first explanation detailing, vaguely, how he came into possession of a gun through no fault of his own and was turning it over at his earliest convenience.

It was also her idea to wrap the packages like birthday gifts in brightly coloured paper, apparently so they were easily distinguishable as from Deku and not as suspicious. They’d hate to have evidence mistaken as bombs or trash and be destroyed, after all.

And if Izuku had and Inko were both very tired, not leaving the library’s program room until barely an hour before midnight, then they deserved a laugh. They deserved the giggles that carried them all the way home from the idea of Eraserhead opening a pink and white flowered present in the middle of his patrol.

(Tsukauchi regretted all his life choices when he came into work after an actual weekend off to find a small cake on his desk and several co-workers distraught about missing his birthday. He knew, just knew, that the orange and green striped gift on his desk was not only at fault, but also contained a Headache. He felt perfectly justified in eating the cake first.)

Plan A: Adoption

Chapter Summary

> Aizawa makes some troubling connections, sends a gift of his own, and recruits allies for his plan. Hizashi and Tsukauchi aren't allowed to name said plan.

Chapter Notes

> We finally see Aizawa and his protective tendencies up close. I hope you enjoy!

Everything started with a package. A package, not a present, no matter what the bow or Hizashi suggested.

The package was pink. Pink with white spots and it sat in the branches of a tree in a rooftop garden that Eraserhead semi-regularly used to drink a jelly pouch and regroup during his patrols.

The package could have been part of some sort of lovers' game, but the garden wasn't particularly *nice.* The overgrown trees and encroaching weeds topped a low office building in an area that held a veneer of respectability by day and a fog of destitution by night. A romantic gesture here was illogical.

There were no cameras for any sort of verification. Well, there were cameras, but the building's owner had long stoped paying upkeep charges or hiring anyone to watch them, which was one of the reasons why Eraserhead actually stopped here.

Shouta drank his pouch and tried not to glare. While he'd become a hero to help people, particularly the people that society often forgot to help, he'd also become a hero because he was a nosy, curious man who didn't like to leave puzzles alone.

And this puzzle was suspicious.

It didn't get any less suspicious when he hefted himself into the tree only to find *to Eraserhead* in large, flourished writing. He stared at the tag from the branch above, thinking about who'd he pissed off recently and if anyone was likely to put a bomb in a box for him, when a breeze blew the tag around, revealing *from Deku.*

So it was a headache in a box.

Deku, as a consultant, was very good. The research was detailed, the conclusions were backed up, and the suggestions were clever. Even better, Deku clearly labelled when something was an assumption or a estimation and therefore had room for error. Shouta was damn good at improvising, but he always appreciated a heads up that things might go sideways.

There was something about Deku, however, that had Shouta wary. It wasn't a negative wary, the kind that sat is his gut whispering about bad-wrong-incoming, but rather a little flag that kept popping up only to disappear whenever Shouta tried to look at the colour.

Deku's type of clever was sharp and fierce, but rough around the edges, like the consultant had very little formal training. The replies were also immediate when Shouta was responding to Deku's own emails, only ever sent in late afternoon or evening. If Shouta tried an email at any point in the day there was no response, which wasn't unusual for someone with a traditional day job, which implied that consulting wasn't Deku's day job.

Which made sense since Deku had yet to ask for the compensation that was really quite deserved.

Also, and this point bothered Shouta in a way that the other's didn't quite manage, Deku was *grateful* for every response Shouta sent. To the point where any time Shouta added a slight suggestion, such as how a different format might be easier to read or had Deku considered looking from a different angle, they were accounted for immediately.

Shouta had never met another pro, hero or otherwise, who had so little push back on their own work. Who had so little arrogance that they barely had any professional pride.

Professional pride that would have been earned, damnit. Deku might think so far out of the damn box that Shouta wasn't sure the consultant always realized the box actually existed, but Deku was *useful.* Deku had helped close six cases in the past two months. Considering the consultant only worked on an average of one case for Shouta a week and presumably worked for other heroes at the same time, that kind of record was damn impressive.

Impressive enough that Shouta hadn't really looked much behind the cloak and dagger, besides vetting the first few rounds of information extensively. He, himself, actively avoided attention, so he couldn't really judge Deku for doing the same.

With a sigh, Eraserhead split the dark pink box with a knife from his boot and opened the present from Deku.

Shouta was tired. (If one more teacher gave him snark about all his free time since expelling his entire homeroom, he was going to punch them. They all worked for Nezu. There was no excuse for thinking that the rat would give Shouta *time off*. Such a thought wasn't just ridiculous, it was *illogical.*)

The point was, he was far too tired to deal with the a broken respirator, a hastily drawn blueprint of what the functioning whole might look like, and a note saying it had been 'found in the trash, by accident, honest, but this means that Smokescreen is susceptible to his own quirk and could be disabled by breaking the villain's suit and hey, Eraserhead, you could contact the manufacturer and get client lists, maybe.'

"What the hell, kid," he asked the night sky, only to freeze as his own words came tumbling back to him on cool winds.

Shouta carefully boxed away his thoughts with the respirator and tucked the package under his arm as he leapt off the roof.

He could only focus on one critical situation at a time, and since the ki-Deku had gifted the evidence to Eraserhead, Deku was still a consultant and not a vigilante. Shouta only had one critical situation, a serial killer who liked to gas his victims, and that case was much closer to being solved than it had been when he started his jelly pouch.

One critical situation and a mess (no formal training, school not work hours, corrections from an authority figure and not suggestions from a colleague- he was teacher, how did he miss - shit).

He could handle a mess. It would be okay (the black clouds that spun at the corner of his dry dry eyes weren't looming, not yet, because he hadn't failed again, not yet).

Several packages later and Hizashi opened his door with his hair up in a haphazard bun, an old UA sweater hanging off one shoulder, and a look of utter shock on his face. Shouta ignored this as he marched past his friend and through the door.

“I need your help.”

Hizashi blinked. “Shouta, my man, my honoured coworker and dearest friend, what the actual *fuck.”*

Shouta looked out from long dark hair, nonplussed at actually having to repeat himself. “I need your help.” He shook his head, deciding that three coffees were not nearly enough to beat his fatigue, and moved to steal Hizashi’s.

The Voice Hero watched Shouta drain the cup of coffee in its cat-covered mug then skirted Shouta to sit at the table where Hizashi had previously been eating pancakes and grading second year English essays. Hizashi never once took his gaze off his red-eyed friend.

“Shouta, buddy. It’s 9 am on a Saturday. You’re never up a 9 am on a Saturday unless you have a case. Which you did, last night. I shouldn’t be seeing you until tomorrow at noon after the week you’ve had.”

Shouta didn’t say anything for a moment because Hizashi wasn’t wrong, instead just stared at his empty mug with unblinking eyes.

“Right.” Hizashi slammed his hands on the table in the act of heaving himself upwards. Both men paused slightly before ignoring Shouta’s flinch at the sound. They’d been friends too long through way too much trauma to not know when to push things and when to leave things the fuck alone.

Hizashi did drape his sweater over the tired man’s shoulders as he passed into the kitchen, pointing Shouta into a chair. “Sit down. I’m going to make you a smoothie because I respect your love of liquid fruit while hating those damn pouches and your general food habits. While I complete this remarkable gesture of true friendship, you are going to sit at that table and tell me what is going on and why you need my, obviously excellent, help this bright and early morning.”

Shouta slumped into the chair more rag doll than man. “I fucked up, Zashi.” Shouta’s words were quiet, spoken directly into the worn wood of the table. Hizashi wouldn’t have heard them at all if he hadn’t slipped his hearing aids in while on route to the kitchen.

“So it’s a strawberry smoothie day, then?”

Shouta huffed out a poor man’s attempt at a laugh. “Yeah.” He listened to Hizashi putter around in the kitchen for several moments, letting the sounds of cupboards thumping accent the thrum of

Hizashi's beast of a fridge.

Shouta loved his friends, for all that pulling teeth would never be enough to get him to admit it. He loved that there was never any doubt that Hizashi would help him, only the man trying to figure out how to help and sliding into the old standard of feeding Shouta as a start.

His love of his friends was also the reason why he pretended not to notice Hizashi texting someone, probably Nemuri, while blending the soon to be smoothie. (It was Nemuri, she and Hizashi had a tried and true Taking Care of Shouta Plan and the man actually asking either one of them for help outside of cases was the reddest of red flags.)

Cheek pressed into the cool wood, Shouta stared at the loose pages of Hizashi's marking, done in blue pen so not to be discouraging. Shouta always used red.

Deku was probably used to a lot of red.

"Do you remember Deku?" Shouta asked the papers.

Hizashi hummed in response, sliding the smoothie over to his friend and taking the swat beside him, across from the marking. "Your new consultant?"

Shouta made a noise of consent while wrapping long fingers around the cool glass.

"Well yeah, then. I was actually playing with seeing if I could borrow him for a bit if we don't get any leads on this phantom robber within in the week. I know you said he plays best underground, but we're getting a bit desperate."

"More of a wariness of daylight agencies. Deku would help, though, especially if I vouched for you."

"But? There's a definite but there, Shou. Did Deku turn out to be on the take or something?" Hizashi tapped the table in a low pattern.

"No. Absolutely not."

"Then what's the problem?" Hizashi raised a brow along with his tone.

Shouta looked up, finally, head drawn straight like it had been

attached to a piano wire suddenly pulled taught. The shadows under he eyes were starker than usual and voice rougher still. “Deku’s a kid, Zashi. A goddamn kid. Can’t be much older than our students.”

Hizashi could have asked Shouta if he was sure, but Shouta wasn’t known for expelling students for shits and giggles. Shouta knew his own reputation, revelled in it, most of the time. Both in terms of the fear he instilled in students and faculty, and in the sheer level of chaos he could create (he was Nezu’s favourite for a reason, and that reason wasn’t just Shouta’s level of sheer competency; you needed a certain mindset to interact with the Principal of UA so frequently and not go running for the damn hills).

But the kids that graduated with Shota’s approval all became strong, living heroes. Shouta *checked.* His classes might have the fewest graduates, but damn it all, they had some of the best survival rates in the whole damn county (they didn’t have to mourn their friends, didn’t have to watch their worlds shatter around them, didn’t have to have their own Oboro weighing their hearts and clouding their eyes).

Shouta had good people skills, which drove Hizashi and Nemuri to despair, because Shouta simply didn’t use them for interaction. People were stupid and catering to them wasted energy. Reading them and their behaviour was much more valuable, and allowed Shouta to act only when he wanted.

He wanted to act.

He knew Deku was a kid. He knew from Deku’s mannerisms and the hesitations between written words. He knew from that place in his gut which clenched when kids thought being a hero was about fun, fame, and fortune. He knew from that place in his throat that stopped his breath when when a kid pushed that much harder, when they had a *reason* to be a hero and Shouta could help them. He knew from that place in his eyes that seared with shadows and clouds and darkness when he was caught in his own past or seeing a child he couldn’t help, not in time.

This wasn’t proof. This wasn’t evidence. This wasn’t enough to do *anything* with, not officially.

But this was Hizashi, not Present Mic, and while Hizashi wasn’t official, he was Shouta’s best friend.

Hizashi clapped his hands together, simply accepting Shouta’s statement. “Right. So teenage consultant with a side of brilliance.

Unusual. But I'm not seeing the crisis just yet?"

Shouta scowled, a slow motion that began with his eyebrows and ended locked in his jaw. Hizashi's sweater weighed down Shouta's shoulders.

Hizashi waved a hand. "Hey, hey, hey. None of that. Just cause I'm not on the same train of leaping logic doesn't mean I can't be. I believe you and believe you wouldn't be here this early on a sunny Saturday unless there was a problem larger than a bit of underage employment. So tell me what it is."

Hizashi's voice was louder by the end, which wasn't unusual, though the hand now covering Shouta's was. It was only as the warm skin settled on Shouta's fingers that he realized he'd been trembling.

He really needed to sleep. Eventually. He'd gotten two hours after his shower in the adrenaline crash after the trafficking ring they'd taken down. It was barely enough, but was all he could get with Deku's multiple packages floating through his dreams.

Shouta sighed, shifting his hand slowly until he'd reversed the palm and was able to grasp Hizashi's hand in his. Shouta made sure to study the wood grain's pattern against various coloured ink stains instead of looking up to see the expression on his oldest friend's face.

"I suspected about a month ago. Deku started leaving packages. I'm not sure how many of us get them, Tsukauchi and I definitely, holding evidence. Support gear, quirk remnants, stolen goods, all with a note explaining it had fallen in Deku's lap and they thought I could use it better. All with a very explicit note saying the kid wasn't trying to be a vigilante." Shouta held his free hand up, splayed wide. "I've received three in the last month, Zashi, just sitting along my patrol routes, wrapped in paper and bows."

Hizashi snorted, tightening the hand over Shouta's even as Hizashi met his friend's red glare. "Sorry, just, the kid sent you presents? That's great. I love them already."

Shouta kept the glare for a beat longer, then let it melt into a toothy grin. "This first was in pink and white spotted paper." The pink had matched the pair of sweatpants Nemuri had gotten him perfectly.

The burst of laughter than rang around the room was loud, but not quite enough to trigger Shouta using Erasure. "Oh, the kid's a keeper Shou."

“Yeah, that’s the plan.”

“WhAT?”

Hizashi looked sheepish, even as Shouta’s hair settled and he continued. “Deku is brilliant, being young doesn’t change that, neither does the possibility the kid has an intelligence quirk. Honestly, I’m even more impressed because the kid convince multiple professionals whose jobs are literally to be suspicious that they were receiving adult level assistance. Deku is already skating the line of vigilantism, despite what the kid is claiming, regardless of intent. We can’t let Deku slip into villainy. That would be bad, very bad, if we’re assuming the kid will get even better with time. Which I’m absolutely sure is the case.”

All mirth had faded from Hizashi’s face. “And you think villainy is a likely concern? Seems extreme.”

Shouta let out a sharp laugh that sounded like broken glass. “Extreme? Why isn’t this kid in hero school? Why do they feel the need to make up a name and help without telling anyone who they are? Without telling a hero? Hizashi, we both know that kids idolize heroes and that the hero path tends to be their first choice.”

“How do you know it’s not? Don’t give me that look. I trust you, Shou, but you’re making an awful lot of assumptions considering you don’t know the kid’s identity. Deku could be in hero school and chafing under restrictions. Or, I don’t know, younger than high school and planning to apply.”

Shouta studied their hands, particularly his rough and slightly dirty nails against the scuffed gold of the ring Hizashi received from his grandfather. “Zashi, I’ve studied the emails Deku sent. Poured over them, to be honest. This kid isn’t okay. This kid has a desperate desire to help people, yet is choosing to do so as something other than a hero, secretly. That in itself raises all sorts of flags.

“The rest of my reasons are in Deku’s words. Zashi, there’s *no* arrogance in those words. None. There’s professional pride, barely, in the bones of assured validity and acknowledgement of consequences, but no bragging, no gloating, no acceptance of a job well done. There is, however, a frightening amount of dedication to the ‘what ifs’ and an almost pathological notation every single time something is based on a supposition or scarce evidence. It doesn’t matter that a few scant months in and I’d already take a guess from Deku over witness reports from most civilians, hell, even several Pros. Every guess is all but

labelled in capital letters with an inscribed ‘please use your own judgement.’”

Shouta squeezed Hizashi’s hand once to stop the man from speaking, knowing there was one more bit to say. “And I experimented. The kid *doesn’t believe* praise. I’ve been including more thanks and compliments in my emails and have learned that, apparently, it’s absolutely possible to convey ‘flusterd’ over email. Deku denies or deflects everything to my own efforts. Somehow, this kid is utterly confident in his analysis ability, yet completely unable to see that his ability makes him special.

“But that alone wouldn’t make me worry about villainy, Hizashi. We both know good heroes have a *reason* for choosing heroics, and it’s not often very pleasant. I’d bet my scarf that this kid has one of those reasons. Yet anytime I even hint that Deku might have hero potential I get shut down. Hard. Not as if there’s no interest, but as if Deku is completely resigned that consultant is as far as they could ever reach. If the kid’s situation has led to that, then, I-“

Shouta ended on a growl when the words stopped coming, getting tangled in his throat.

Hizashi understood that growl, had heard it several times over the years. He slid his second hand over his first, covering the tips of Shouta’s fingernails. “You’re worried that the little listener’s reason is something like abuse or a villainous quirk. That the environment or people around will take away whatever confidence that has let them grasp at consulting as a way to help.”

Hizashi’s words slammed into Shouta with the weight of a heavy door. The old oak panels, maybe, that had blocked out the light when Shouta had been thrown into the cellar for accidentally erasing his parents’ quirks. Or the heavy metal plating that had slammed hard enough to break bones when the upperclassman’s verdict to punish the school ‘villain’ involved storage rooms and darkness.

“The kid isn’t okay, Zashi. It’s not okay.” Shouta hadn’t been okay, not then, when the darkness that burned in his eyes was from locked doors and could still lead to tears.

“Then we’ll make it okay.” Hizashi squeezed Shouta’s hands before leaning back in his chair with crossed arms and a cocky smile on his face.

Despite all of Shouta’s best intentions, he felt a small smile start to

grow on his own lips. “Yeah?”

“We’re heroes, Shou, it’s what we do. Sides,” Hizashi’s grin slid crooked as his head tilted, “You’ve never been wrong about a kid having potential yet.”

Shouta thought of emails, about the fact he still wasn’t sure how this kid had even found Eraserhead’s email in the first place. He thought of plans upon plans upon backup plans. He thought of the section included on every single report about minimizing civilian casualties. He thought about the comments laced with worry regarding Eraserhead’s own workload. He thought of analysis whose quality hadn’t decreased one bit when there was only one possible victim.

“Yeah,” Shouta said quietly, “They have potential.”

“YEAH! Then lets adopt you a little listener!”

“Really?” Shouta, red-eyed, asked as Hizashi, unrepentant, stood up.

“Really. Drink your smoothie. You have a plan to update me on. Tell me how you’re going to woo the kid to the bright side of legal heroics and formal educational institutions!”

Shouta stood as well, slipping his arms into Hizashi’s sweater properly and dutifully taking a sip of the still rather tasty smoothie. He let his grin grow into the toothy thing that he knew terrified his students and, to be perfectly honest, several of his fellow staff.

He opened his phone and slid his first messages with Deku across the table for Hizashi to read. Shouta then carefully dumped the bag that had been sitting by his feet on the table, revealing his laptop, three cameras, two mirrors, and his goggles.

“I sent Deku my own gift and got the kid’s phone number. It’s, obviously, a burner. Now we’re going to lure the analyst with analysis. And a side of validation.”

Hizashi had looked up as the items hit the table, but had quickly gone back to the phone, scrolling down to read the rest of the kid’s questions (if Shouta hadn’t been convinced that Deku was a kid originally, that text would have cinched it; the kid *babbled)*.

“Okay, I’m impressed, especially since I know both how little information on you is actually available and how tight lipped you are in general. But don’t you know most of the answers to the limits of

your quirk?"

Shouta shrugged. "Most. But I haven't really explored my quirk since we were students. Things change. Hell," he he gestured to one of the newer cameras, "technology changes."

Hizashi looked up slowly. "So. Tell me if I'm getting this straight. Instead of spending the morning marking the papers of kids who barely understand what a period is, much less a comma, I get to help my best friend, who I was expecting to have to drag out of his sleeping bag tomorrow evening for food and human interaction, play with his quirk. All in order to help a kid."

Nose twitching, Shouta, preemptively silence Hizashi. "Yes."

"Whoo! I'm texting Nemuri!"

"Didn't you already do that?" They both stared at each other for a moment after Shouta's dry as dust question, silently debating whether to acknowledge that Shouta did, indeed, know of the Take Care of Shouta Plan.

Hizashi broke first, all sunny smiles. "Yep! But now I'm telling her to bring lunch! We're making this a day. Don't worry, we'll let you nap. I found the sleeping bag you left in my closet, don't think I didn't."

As Hizashi continued to type away Shouta let his head rest on the table, making sure to face the door and thus hide any chance of his smile being spotted.

They'd make it okay. (It was already approaching okay, now that the warmth of Hizashi's voice could remind Shouta that the shadowed clouds weren't physically there, weren't dark rooms or Oboro's loss blocking light from his quirk-dry eyes.)

Eraserhead thumped his purple and orange wrapped package down onto Detective Tsukauchi's desk about a month after the hero's talk with Hizashi, right next to the man's yellow and green one. Shouta had meant to do this earlier, but he'd been *busy*. "We need to talk."

Tsukauchi stared at the two boxes for a moment before leaning forward and pinching his nose. "Please, please don't be here to tell me Deku has crossed into vigilantism. My boss is already leaning down my neck about it, but Deku is the most useful CI slash consultant

we've had in years. Don't take that away from me and give me more paperwork at the same time. Just don't."

Shouta looked down at the slumped detective, commiserating heavily with the exhaustion in his posture. "I'm not here for that."

Squinting up at Shouta, Tsukauchi shook his head. "Why aren't I comforted?"

"Because you actually know me," Shouta deadpanned.

"Right," Tsukauchi snorted. He then kicked out the wooden chair next to his desk with one scuffed boot. "Sit and tell me where all my free time is about to go."

"You get free time?" Shouta slouched into the chair, arms dangling over the sides in a deliberately casual motion that he knew Tsukauchi wouldn't believe for a second. Which was fine, since Shouta was more trying to convince himself.

Tsukauchi snorted a second time. "About as much as you."

Shouta just smirked. Tsukauchi was one of the rare few Shouta would probably call a friend, for all they'd never so much as shared a meal together that didn't involve work. What they did share, however, was an unofficial job that drove them both into the ground, even if they'd never give it up.

Tsukauchi had met Nezu, and was one of the even rarer few who not only had no comment when Shouta had expelled his entire class, but had also looked at Shouta with sympathy, understanding all too easily the sort of running around the Principal would have him do. Tsukauchi faced a similar fate, after all, since it was amazing how many cases seemed to need a human lie detecter.

"So spill, Eraser. To my knowledge we aren't on a joint case, unless Deku dropped something special into your lap." Tsukauchi waved a hand to the two packages with their bright boxes.

Shouta paused, eyes tracing the ceiling panels, before deciding to just do as the detective asked. "Deku's a kid."

"Shit."

Shouta nodded. "That was my reaction." He let that sit in the air for a moment, still looking at fluorescent lights until his eyes started to

burn. “It gets worse.”

“‘Course it does.” Tsukauchi laid both palms flat on the battered metal of his desk.

“He’s *quirkless.”*

Tsukauchi sucked in a sharp breath. “Double shit.”

They were both quiet. They both not only knew the statistics for the quirkless, but lived the realities.

Eraserhead, by nature of his late patrols and habit of traveling by rooftop, had talked more than a few jumpers off ledges (the clouds floating at the edges of his vision always got worse when he failed them, always felt like an anchor of loss dragging from his eyes to his limbs, and he was already fucking *attached* because the thought of Deku, of *Midoriya Izuku,* up on one of those rails was all but blinding).

Tsukauchi’s first partner on the force had been quirkless. The woman had retired now, but Tsukauchi had credited her with teaching him to be a good cop, one who was more than just his quirk. He’d had more than a few drinks the night Tsukauchi had told Shouta about her, after a bad case where a mother had drowned her quirkless child, along with a rant full of anger that his former partner had never risen as far in the ranks as Tsukauchi had known she should have.

“I tracked the kid to his school. It wasn’t fucking easy; the kid is careful, but he hasn’t been trained.” Shouta had briefly debated bringing in the big guns, but he really didn’t want to go quite that far just yet. “I’m not happy with what I saw at that school. Deku’s definitely getting bullied and the staff are absolutely complicit.”

“Nezu?”

“Oh, I’ll be throwing the school to him eventually, but I don’t want to spook the kid.” Shouta sighed, thinking of the sadistic joy he’d felt as Nezu taught Shouta to raze his former school to the ground. Then he thought of storage rooms with broken desks and the way that even as he’d hated the dark back then, he’d still trusted the dark far more than that sliver of light under the door.

Shouta ran a hand through long hair, grimacing when his fingers caught in a snarl. “I’d have spooked. If someone had tried to tell me everything I knew was wrong and that they were going to fix it, for free, I’d have run. Far. And I’m not sure we’d find Deku, if he truly

went to ground."

Tsukauchi was an excellent reader of body language, as most good cops are, so merely put his chin is hand and let Shouta avoid eye contact. "So you didn't go full stalker, then?" He asked, drily.

Shouta closed his eyes and bared his teeth, just a bit. "No."

The detective's hesitation was evident enough that Shouta opened one eye and actually met Tsukauchi's gaze. The man didn't look away. "Can I ask about the family?"

"Just a mother. I'm pretty sure she's good. Possibly very good. The kid looks at her like she's his whole world. She looks at hecklers like she would smack them with her purse and punch them in the nose for insulting her baby if she didn't have to an example to set."

Tsukauchi let out a gusty breath. "Good. That's good." The man turned sideways in his chair to fully face Shouta, arm slung over the coat draped along the back. "So. What's the plan?"

"The plan is to make him my intern. I don't have an official agency to run through hoops and the Underground Coalition I'm part of is easy to manage. The heroes and staff who work there are well used to cagey underground heroes who may be willing to share resources but rarely full personal stories. Besides, I have seniority, which basically just means they know me. They'll have no trouble believing I had my intern pose as a consultant for a logical ruse to test reactions and treatment of the kid. It would also solve the payment issue I know must have bothered you as much as me."

Tsukauchi nodded, slowly. "Not bad. It would also quell any official worries about vigilantism and provide oversight to make sure the kid doesn't bite off more than he can chew." Tsukauchi clapped his hands, eerily reminiscent of Hizashi, as a large grin spread across his face. His eyes even started sparkling.

Shouta didn't trust sparkling eyes.

"Plan A: Adoption: I'm in." The sparkles were almost evident in Tsukauchi's tone.

Shouta stared at him.

Tsukauchi just nodded again, as if Shouta had responded. "Get me the paperwork, Eraser, and I can backdate it."

There was a long pause full of suffering (Shouta was best friends with *Present Mic,* he knew how to be dramatic) and then a soft thump.

Tsukauchi paused for another long moment as he met eyes that just dared him to comment. He stared at the folder that was now sitting on his desk, then back at Shouta and the hero's complete lack of bag or obvious large pocket.

Tsukauchi obviously bit back some sigh-grin combo."Right. I look forward to meeting my new nephew."

Shouta twitched. "I haven't even talked to the kid."

Tsukauchi proceeded to give Shouta the deadpan stare of a man who is lied to constantly, despite the general knowledge that this is Not a Good Idea.

Shouta considered returning the I'm Tired Do Not Fuck With Me look he'd perfected on his students, then decided that the faint vibration of his phone in his pocket already meant he'd lost this battle.

"His name's Midoriya. I'll add you to the chat."

"Excellent idea."

Shouta left the station with an ally, a folder of completed paperwork, and a new group chat (the shadowed burning behind Shouta's eyes lessened with each word the kid typed).

Plan C and Plan A

Chapter Summary

> Izuku gets a new phone number and Does Not fanboy or freakout. He also has another conversation on a roof.

Chapter Notes

> One more chapter to go after this! I'm planning on turning this into a series (so there will be more) but Plans C and A will be wrapping up soon. Thanks for all you support!

Izuku got Eraserhead's phone number on a Friday.

School had finished for the weekend and Izuku was catching his breath after a mad dash out of the building to avoid Kacchan.

The bright pink box was impossible to ignore, even tucked up in a tree. It wasn't one of Izuku's usual trees, in that he generally tried to avoid using the same drop-off spot more than once every few months. It was inconvenient as hell, but he really didn't want to be caught. Or stopped.

This tree, however, was along one of Eraserhead's favourite patrol routes, and within sight of three different locations Deku had used before.

And the box was wrapped in pink with white unicorns.

Izuku stared at it a moment, out of the corner of his eye. Then looked around at the relatively empty street, already covered in shadows due to the early fading light of winter.

He bit his lip, splitting it open again and tasting iron.

Izuku knew, just knew, that the gift was for Deku. He didn't know what was inside, wasn't sure if it was a trap, but it was for *him.* It was for him and from Eraserhead.

He *wanted* it.

The box was relatively easy to get down; Izuku had often lost bullies in the park by quickly scaling trees and then staying very still. He shoved the package in his school bag, squashing his completed math

homework, with barely a glance at the clearly scrawled ‘Deku’ in thick black marker.

When he got home, slamming into the empty apartment, he retreated straight to his room, throwing the bag on the floor while holding the impossibly light box on his lap.

The pink and white of the paper was vibrant against his emerald comforter. The box underneath was small, the kind you’d get at a bakery for a couple of pastries, and inside was a single sheet of paper.

When he entered the number in his phone, two hours later after buying a burner just for this moment, his hand vibrated so hard he had to retype the digits twice, and the message three times.

Deku: *Hello?*

Eraserhead: *Deku.*

Izuku fanboyed for longer this time, closer to twenty minutes, despite his previous communications with the hero. He used the time productively, though, and managed to control his mutterstorm.

Eraserhead therefore received one full paragraph containing questions about his quirk instead of five (apparently Izuku found email easier for maintaining professionalism).

Eraserhead: *Wow.*

Eraserhead: *I’ll get back to that.*

Eraserhead: *Do you have anything on the Nakamura brothers? There’s a raid tonight on a human trafficking ring, and they’re involved. You mentioned them possibly fencing for the Grabbers.*

Deku: *Sorry!*

Deku: *Oh yeah, give me half an hour? I have a basic analysis started. You want quirks/strengths/weakness for the raid?*

Eraserhead: *Please.*

Eraserhead: *Half an hour's fine.*

And it was fine. Izuku completed his battle analysis, texted the documents to Eraser, and wished the man good luck. All without losing his shit, again.

The best part, by far, was the next day. Izuku, for the first time in ages, woke to a text notification on his phone. Eraserhead was brief, probably exhausted, but he *thanked* Izuku and let the boy know that the raid was successful. That Izuku helped saved thirteen teenagers from being sold out of country.

Then, then Eraser got *back to that.* He texted Izuku that his quirk worked in mirrors and glass, only weaker, and that he hadn't tried it much over video but after an experiment that morning it turns out the effectiveness depends on the quality of the camera. He shared that he often left his hair down for the intimidation factor, but would tie it up for stealth missions.

Eraserhead answered all of Izuku's questions.

Izuku was actually rather proud of how quickly he got used to texting the underground hero, particularly since Eraserhead was now the second most used contact in his phone. Also since Eraserhead had always been in Izuku's top five favourite heroes; the man worked practically quirkless! He probably would have been consistently second or even first if he hadn't been so hard to find information on, at least before the hero started working with Deku.

Eraserhead asked Izuku for quick analysis of images sometimes, or texted Izuku updates to fast moving cases. Izuku still emailed large packages of information for general cases or neighbourhoods, but the vast majority of their communication now happened over text.

By the fourth week of texts, Izuku almost had his instinctive need to squeal under control. It helped that Izuku *liked* Eraserhead, as a person, and that Eraserhead actually seemed to enjoy their

conversations, despite his tendency to reply in one word or less.

Really the only incident that week occurred when the man sent Izuku a cat picture. Literally just a picture of an alley cat twining about Eraserhead's ankles with no explanation.

Izuku's hard-fought (non-existent) decorum went out the window durning the fifth week, however.

Eraserhead added Tsukauchi to the chat.

Eraserhead: *Tsukauchi wanted to talk.*

Tsukauchi: *Thanks for the advice on the Incisor, you were spot on.*

Deku: *Detective Tsukauchi! No problem. Did you manage to find out his motive? You must have, your quirk is so cool! Did he still try to lie? Or tell half truths? Does that work? Can you tell? What about if they believe they're telling the truth? Like a fanatic? Do you check body language as well, you must have other indicators with your record.*

Deku: *Um. Oops.*

Tsukauchi: *Wow, Eraser, you were right.*

Tsukauchi: *Don't think I've ever been fanboyed on.*

Tsukauchi: *Thanks, kid.*

Deku: *Sorry!*

Deku: *And I'm not a kid.*

Eraserhead: *Very convincing.*

Eraserhead: *Kid.*

Tsukauchi: *Don't worry about it, kid. We're keeping you.*

Eraserhead: *Agreed.*

Tsukauchi: *To useful too even think otherwise.*

Deku: …*Ok.*

(Izuku had three contacts in his phone, looked for cats on his way to school, and tried not cry when Tsukauchi texted both him and Eraserhead to *go to damn sleep already, it's important for growing bodies, set a goddamn example, Eraser.* Izuku didn't always succeed.)

Everything ended with an essay.

It was a stupid essay, so so easy, and that was the problem. Izuku had pulled an all nighter drafting an analysis of several businesses to help Bubble Girl trail some dirty money for her third (and hopefully not misogynistic) boss. The essay for school, asking for a review of an industry and its connections or reliance on quirks, was much simpler.

Except Izuku wrote the essay honestly. He had all this information floating around in his head from Bubble Girl's case, and he'd forgotten all about his homework so had to write the paper on two hours of sleep. He'd barely had time to print the thing, much less do any editing, before meekly handing it to the teacher and passing out at his desk.

That had been a week ago. This week had included getting a zero in front of the whole class and receiving detention for plagiarizing, because the worthless, useless, quirkless Izuku could not have written

a perfect paper.

Izuku could have dealt with that, though. The jeering sucked, the detention took away his consulting time, and the condescension was irritating, but he had a hero and a police detective and his mom all thinking he was great. Bubble girl had also thanked him *twice* and his mom was trying to convince Izuku that as Deku it would be perfectly acceptable to ask for Bubble Girl's phone number to make communication easier.

So Izuku could handle the school-sanctioned bullying. What he'd forgotten, beyond the fact that he wasn't supposed to put *Deku-level effort* into *schoolwork,* was that Kacchan knew him. Kacchan knew that the one thing Izuku had was his brain. He knew Izuku would never plagiarize. Therefore, Kacchan knew that Izuku had written a paper better than Kacchan's own.

Izuku being better at Kachaan in something made the exploding boy *angry*.

So Izuku found himself leaning against a rail that edged the school roof, staring into the frozen pond as the temperature dropped faster than the sun. He was leaning too far forward on the rail, he knew he was, but the position let up just a bit of pressure in his back. Which hurt.

It had been a while since Kachhan had been that devoted to chasing him down. There really hadn't been much chance of Izuku escaping, not today.

Izuku closed his eyes and let the cool air creep under his singed jacket and brush against his fevered skin. He couldn't go to the library and meet his mom, not with these injuries.

Izuku needed to treat them before she saw, because his injuries would hurt her. He just couldn't quite handle going home to an empty apartment yet, not with him unable to focus on anything but the image of his teacher tearing his paper to shreds in front of a jeering class and fuming Kacchan.

He was more upset about the paper than the burns.

Izuku had written that paper with Deku's information, in Deku's mindset, with Deku's standards. It felt like his teacher had torn apart Deku's work, not Izuku's, and that made *Izuku* angry.

He wasn't used to being angry. Anger never helped him.

The metal under his hands was slick beneath white knuckles, but allowed him to feel the faint vibration of another person before he saw their shadow out of the corner of his eye.

"I'm not going to jump." Izuku probably would have been more believable without the rasp in his throat.

The stranger lent on the rail, black shirt baggy and stark against the rail as he rested his hip against it. "I know."

Izuku didn't look up, even as his sluggish thoughts start turning around because there was *something* about that voice.

A phone was waved in front of Izuku's face, an image of a tortoiseshell cat sitting on fence weaving in front of his eye. "You didn't reply to Miss. Marsh's most recent photo. Thought I'd get your opinion in person."

Izuku turned so slowly he should have creaked. As he took in long dark hair, bruised eyes, rough stubble, and thin scarf at least three times as long as Izuku was tall, he blinked.

"Eraserhead."

"Deku." The man smirked.

If Izuku's hand didn't feel frozen to the rail, if he wasn't absolutely certainly that if he released his grip his fingers would tremble, Izuku would have probably flailed right off that roof.

Eraserhead clearly thought so too, since he wrapped an end of his capture weapon several times around Izuku's wrist.

"Shit." Izuku's voice had lost the rasp but gained a squeak. He didn't think it an improvement.

Eraserhead evidently did, since his smirk widened. "Language, kid."

"I'm not going to jump."

Eraserhead raised a single eyebrow before repeating, "I know."

Izuku raised his captured wrist without letting go of the rail.

With a snort, Eraserhead shifted and leaned on the rail himself.

“You’re slippery.”

They were quiet for a moment, wind slipping by, before Izuku drew a deep shuddering breath. “Is this where you tell me to stop?”

“No.”

“No?” Izuku asked, a bit incredulous. “But you know my age,” he hesitated, “and that I’m quirkless.” Because Eraserhead did know. If the man had tracked Izuku to his school, then the hero absolutely knew exactly who Izuku was.

“You’re not a vigilante.”

Izuku waited, but when the man wasn’t any more forthcoming, he spoke again, “I’m, I’m going to need more than that.”

Eraserhead sighed, peering out through the side of one dark eye. “You help people using that ridiculous brain of yours and don’t break the law to do it. You’re not a vigilante; you’re literally being as safe as possible. While being incredibly, frighteningly useful. Problem child, why would I tell you to stop?”

Izuku had turned so his full body faced the Underground hero, only his hands tying him to the rail. “So you’re telling me that you tracked me down to show me a cat picture?” The squeak in Izuku’s voice had yet to go away.

“Hmm. Well that, and to give you this.” Eraserhead pulled a white envelope out of his capture scarf.

Izuku narrowed tired eyes at the paper. “What is it?”

“Your pay check.”

“My what?!” Izuku straightened so rapidly he saw white spots dance. His back was not happy with that motion.

“Consultants get paid, Deku.” Eraserhead looked almost bored, as he stared down and the green boy with a feline head tilt.

Izuku sputtered. He was positive Eraserhead enjoyed Izuku’s suffering.

“Yes,” Eraserhead said, as if there had been sense in the sounds Izuku had made. “You did make things difficult, problem child. Tsukauchi made sure everything was up to date on the police side of things, while I coordinated the underground heroes I’d put you in touch with.

They were quite happy to let me organize the matter on behalf of my intern, though most were quite insistent they get to meet you soon."

"Your-" Izuku didn't finish. Couldn't finish.

"Hero intern. It seemed the logical solution considering your age. If you don't want to be a hero, however, we'll set up proper consulting rates."

Apparently, Eraserhead did, in fact, know Izuku quite well. It turned out that Izuku's hands were not stuck to the rail, and that he was quite capable of flailing himself off the roof.

The capture weapon around Izuku's wrist wasn't nearly as warm as the smirk on Eraserhead's tired face.

(Izuku *wanted.*)

Plan I: Intern

Chapter Summary

Izuku and Aizawa have a conversation. Inko gets involved in the adoption process, but not in the way either expect.

Chapter Notes

So here is the last chapter, for now. I'm in the very early stages pf planning the sequel. I'm also working on a couple of other things, including a time travel work and a crossover with Harry Potter, so we'll see what gets posted first. Thanks for all your incredible support! I've been smiling for weeks.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Everything escalated with a meeting. On a on roof. On the edge of a roof. Because this kid took Plus Ultra far too seriously.

Shouta hadn't been concerned when he'd seen Midoriya (whom Shouta wasn't stalking, thank you very much Hizashi and Tsukauchi) on the roof of the boy's school (which he had just happened to add to his patrol routes a couple times of week, there had been several muggings in the area and those were *crimes* and he was a *hero)*.

He hadn't been concerned, but Shouta had gotten to that roof fairly quickly (he remembered tracking trails of blood from storage closets to the roof to get lost in all that space).

He hadn't been concerned, exactly, but had wrapped his scarf multiple time around the boy's wrist (the shadows at the corner of Shouta's eyes, the ones made of dark versions of Oboro's clouds, burned sharp and cold at thought that Shouta could be *wrong)*. Deku was *helping* and Shouta was pretty sure that was more than enough to ground the boy he'd been texting, but better safe than sorry.

He also hadn't expected the be enveloped in a death hug, but apparently Midoriya liked to prove expectations wrong. As much as Shouta wasn't good with feelings (he was self-aware, thank you Hizashi), this was a much preferable option to the one he hadn't be concerned about, yet couldn't ignore.

Even if there were tears. Midoriya was apparently a crier.

Awkwardly, he knew it was awkwardly, Shouta, wrapped his arms around the bony shoulders that dug into Shouta's chest. He was careful in his placement of weight, wanting Midoriya to know Shouta was returning the affection, but very aware the kid was a bit beat up (his jacket was fucking singed?) and not wanting to make Midoriya feel restricted.

The weight just seemed to make the kid cry harder and Shouta leant back on the rail slightly, resigned to wait everything out the moment he felt small hands fisting in the back of his shirt. He figured the kid deserved a good round of hysterics, even if Shouta was the least comforting presence he could have imagined.

It took about thirty minutes for Midoriya to calm down enough for Shouta to cajole him down and out of the building. Neither commented on the fact that Shouta didn't release the kid from the capture scarf until they'd passed the edge of the school grounds. Nor did they address the fact that about a block down the road, Midoriya had raised a trembling hand and grasped the edge of Shouta's shirt.

The gesture was perhaps a little juvenile, but Shouta deeply understood the need to make sure that the good thing didn't disappear (Hizashi was loud, which was annoying, but at least Shouta always knew he was *there)*.

They also weren't talking about Shouta's promise on the roof. Midoriya had taken the envelope, a little reverent, and held it carefully in his free hand, but Shouta knew the boy was afraid that Shouta would take it all back if asked anything more. Which was annoying, but understandable, if the kid had even fared half as badly as Shouta anticipated under the label of quirkless.

They get it all sorted out soon enough.

In the mean time, Shouta brought up his recent meeting with the Wild Wild Pussycats and watched the kid go. The rescue group didn't exactly work in their area and Midoriya didn't need to consult with rescue heroes very much, but one mention was all the kid needed to go off on the group's strategies and quirks.

Shouta knew the kid could ramble, he'd seen it over text and bit over email as the kid had gotten more comfortable. It was another thing entirely, to hear Midoriya in person.

He'd started out actually talking to Shouta, but midway through discussing Mandalay's quirk and it uses in reaching trapped civilians he devolved into what could only be called a mutterstorm. And while reading Midoriya's ramblings had been interesting, listening to the kid's mutterings was *fascinating*.

He branched out from Mandalay's quirk in rescue situations to potential support gear, skirting but clearly understanding the basic science behind various devices. He then took an abrupt turn into branding, and how smart the Pussycats's cutesy theme was, causing not only villains to underestimate them and civilians to calm quicker, but also considering the societal perceptions of quirks that involve the mind. He proceeded to backtrack on himself, regarding the thought that Mandalay's quirk might not be as threatening because it's only one way, but then detailed how she could use it for some kind of subliminal messaging or for driving someone insane.

This kid.

Shouta had third years (expelling his homeroom didn't mean he got out of teaching courses for other years) who he still had to pull teeth just to get them to think about influences from the Hero Commission, much less societal views as a whole.

Shouta watched the boy out of the corner of his eye as the kid talked and Shouta tried to decide if getting lectured by a middle schooler would motivate or demoralize his older students. Except Shouta got distracted, because Midoriya was *smiling* as he rambled. He was smiling at being dragged somewhere by a grumpy Shouta. In the dark.

They would have to work on his self preservation instincts (the kid and Hizashi must never meet or their combined sunshine would be so bright that Shouta would never get to sleep again).

Midoriya snorted, softly, then immediately blushed. And shit, Shouta had said that bit about the instincts out loud.

The hand in his shirt tightened, slightly, before Shouta could do something stupid like blush in return.

"It's not like I don't have instincts, Eraserhead. But I trust you, and more than that, I know you. Um, I mean not like *know* you, but I know you work for UA and with the police and, well, you're going to do this the right way? And it's not like I don't know my way home from school."

Shouta sighed, raising his eyes to the dark sky. The kid had a point. Shouta couldn't really expect that Midoriya didn't have enough on Eraserhead to do a pretty thorough analysis by now. And he wanted Midoriya to trust him. But still.

"You're not worried that I also know your way home?"

"I mean," Midoriya tugged on his worn jacket with his free hand, "I kinda figured you would?"

"I thought you were hiding Deku?" Shouta narrowed his eyes.

"I was. But I'm a kid? My analysis is good, I *know* that." He emphasized the last bit strangely, like it was something he had to remind himself of often. "But my steps for hiding myself basically depended on the professionals not being interested enough to ask, at least until I finished teaching myself hacking, which is a while away still. I just figured, um, that the phone number thing meant that you were interested, or would be soon?"

Shouta let that sink in for a moment, the words burrowing under his scarf and around his throat. The boy had expected to be caught be someone. "But you messaged me anyways."

Midoriya studied the the pavement. He could have brought up that he'd used a burner phone, instead, the boy shrugged before quietly saying, "Yeah, I did. You're *Eraserhead*."

He could mean that Shouta was a better option, but there was something lacing the edge of Midoriya's words, something Shouta had never really heard in reference to himself. He heard it used for Present Mic thought, and Midnight.

He sighed again. "It's Aizawa, kid. Aizawa Shouta."

The hand let go, and for one sharp moment Shouta thought he'd screwed something up rather badly.

Midoriya turned bright and watering eyes to him, red up to the tips of his ears. "We're here, A-Aizawa Sensei," Midoriya blurted out before running up a set of nearby stairs.

Shouta ruthlessly stamped down the flush of warmth sinking into his bones, but failed to succeed entirely when the stamp of his boots on the stairs had Midoriya, standing on the landing, straightening to the boy's full height.

The Midoriyas lived on the second floor in a low apartment complex. They headed to a nondescript door about a third of the way down the building.

Midoriya took out a key from his pocket and glanced back at Shouta before opening the door. He'd barely finished calling out when a warm voice from deeper inside the greeted him and continued talking. Shouta didn't doubt where the younger Midoriya had picked up the mumbling habit.

"-and you'll never guess who came by the library tonight, Izu-baby! Mizu! It's been years, but apparently her family's moved back to town and one of the first things she did was come see if the bookclub was still open, isn't that sweet. I was in such as good mood that I stopped by for takeout, I got your favourite - oh. I don't think I got enough for three."

Midoriya Inko was a short, another trait she passed to her son, and fairly round woman who wielded kindness like both an air and a weapon. Her eyes were sharp as they took in Shouta, and he had no doubt that they clocked the way Izuku stood slightly in front of Shouta, shifting his feet in nervousness but not fear.

Shouta stepped forward, parent-politeness a familiar hat after many teacher conferences.

Midoriya beat him to it. "Mom, this is-"

"Eraserhead. Yes, dear, I'm aware." There was a sparkle in her eyes that Shouta wouldn't trust, except it seemed to be directed at her son, whose ears were once again rather red.

"Aizawa Shouta." He handed her his hero licence, which she took and studied carefully, to her credit.

"Midoriya Inko. Is Izuku in trouble?" She asked as she handed the licence back.

"Not at all." Shouta watched as both Midoriyas relaxed, Izuku in the releasing of his shoulders and the drop of his bag, Inko in the lines around her eyes and mouth.

Shouta hummed. "As you seem to be aware," Izuku's face did something that only confirmed Shouta's suspicion, "your son has been consulting for me and several others for several months now."

Inko nodded, but said nothing, instead reaching over to pull her son into her side.

Well, Shouta had never been one for subtly. He handed her a stack of papers produced from one of his hidden pockets, which she robotically took without removing her eyes from Shouta's face. "I want to make your son my official intern."

Midoriya, Deku, was practically vibrating, while his mother was stiller than ice.

"Why." Her voice was quiet but firm, more statement than question.

"I want to train your son to be a hero," Shouta kept his answer equally simple, but quickly saw from her expression that it won't be quite enough. He opened his mouth to answer, to somehow summarize that her son was a genius with a core of kindness that heroics *needed,* that he was terrified about what could happen if villains learn of the boy's abilities without the kid being able to protect himself, that there were singe marks on the boy's jacket and which was *wrong,* but he stopped.

Shouta turned, very slightly, to face Deku head on, knowing this was something that they probably should have discussed before (thought not on a damn rooftop) and the kid probably needed to hear.

Shouta certainly had.

"You've saved my life, Deku, or at the very least, saved me from significant amounts of physical harm. You've done the same for Detective Tsukauchi, who is not only an important colleague, but also a friend. You've absolutely saved multiple civilian lives.

"Deku, I want to train you to be a hero not in spite of your lack of quirk, but because you already are a hero. I'll just be helping the world and the bureaucrats see what I already know."

Midoriya Izuku, to Shouta's complete lack of shock, burst into tears. Thankfully, this time there was a slightly less teary Midoriya Inko to act as much better comfort.

Inko, who to Izuku's clear surprise, immediately nodded. "Of course. Thank you."

"What?" Izuku asked though his tears.

Midoriya Inko sniffed, cradling her son's freckled face in her hands.

“You needed support, baby, to follow your dream, support you didn’t have and I couldn’t provide. But I’m proud of how you didn’t give up and worked as hard as you did while staying as safe as you could. If Aizawa is willing to spend the time to make you as safe as possible while following your dream, then of course you can work with him.”

Shouta was pierced with eyes that put Nezu to shame as the small woman looked over her son’s mop of hair. Shouta didn’t think he’d ever been so effectively threatened without anyone saying a word.

He nodded, trying hard to let none of his appreciation at the glare through the gesture.

Midoriya Inko released her son with a firm push towards what Shouta presumed was the kid’s room to freshen up.

She faced Shouta, after a deep breath to get her own tears under control, and he braced himself for the words after all.

“Now, you’d best call me Inko. We’ll be seeing quite a lot of each other.” Shouta blinked, somewhat surprised he didn’t fight the woman as she used his inattention to gently shove him into a seat.

She returned with a plate and napkin which Shouta attempted to deflect. “I really don’t want to take up your time or your food.”

“Nonsense. We have details to go over and a schedule to draft. Not to mention, I demand family dinners.”

“What.” Shouta pushed aside a strand of his black hair to stare into sparkling green eyes. He was pretty sure they were laughing at him.

“You’re too skinny.”

He never got a chance to reply as the kid bounced in, saw Shouta with a plate, and brightened like the sun. “Aizawa Sensei is staying for dinner?!”

“Absolutely. And with some frequency.”

Shouta planned to protest. He planned to say that this was unprofessional. That they could set up a time to meet later. He planned to say that he didn’t really do dinner, not like this.

He planned a lot of things, and they all fell apart under two sets of emerald eyes and warmth gentle like sunshine, but strong like it had

glinted off glass.

“Tsukauchi’s skinnier then I am.” Which wasn’t strictly true, but Shouta was a big believer in deflecting. And throwing his colleagues under the bus for mocking him (Zashi cannot meet this family until Shouta is sure there won’t be a flood of smiles and light and *noise*). “He hasn’t gone a week without working overtime in four months.”

Inko frowned, before looking at her son. “That nice Detective who's helping you?”

The kid nodded frantically. “Detective Tsukauchi is really cool! He’s really clever about using his quirk and tries really hard to help everyone he possibly can.”

“Well then, he’ll just have to come to dinner, too.”

Izuku smiled with a far away look. “Tuesdays would work best. The Detective has a late start on Wednesday and Eraserhead has the night off patrol.” He blushed when both adults looked at him and tried to duck into the kitchen to get the rest of the food. He wasn’t in time to miss his mother giggling at him, or the hand Shouta threw out to ruffle green curls.

“What the kid said.”

(Inko had enough takeout, and Shouta left fuller then he’d been in weeks, with a stack of notebooks tucked under his arm and warmth that didn’t burn behind his eyes.)

It ended with a text. Well, several texts. And a picture.

Izuku was beaming in the photo, gesturing loudly with one hand waving in the air and the other pointing to a page in his Analysis Notebooks. There were no less than seven on the table, pushing a mostly finished bowl of katsudon to the side, and all were open to entries on heroes with mutant quirks.

Tsukauchi, sleeves rolled up, was nodding while steadily devouring a plate of mochi. Inko was ruffling her son’s hair as she cleared the table, bowl in hand and a small, star-bright smile on her lips.

Shouta was grinning in the corner, a goblin of a selfie intruding on the family moment. Shouta knew Hizashi had a habit of literally turning around and walking away whenever confronted with the particular amount of teeth and eyes that went with it. Shouta didn't care. The expression was crucial for delivering his message.

Aizawa sent a photo

Aizawa: *Finders Keepers.*

Aizawa: *I'll share if you help him with hacking. And graduating early*.

Aizawa: *Also destroying a middleschool.*

Nezu: *Intriguing.*

Izuku flailed hardly a moment after Shouta received the Principal's response, launching the bowl at his elbow towards the ground. Aizawa barely heard Inko's praise of Tsukauchi's reflexes over Izuku's screech.

"Oh my gosh, what the fuck, why did Principal Nezu just text me?! Is this real?"

Shouta grinned into his capture weapon, still with more teeth than might be considered normal, but also with more warmth than his coworkers would likely believe possible.

He shrugged, immediately drawing the kid's attention and Tsukauchi's suspicion. "Pretty sure it was in my contract to let the Rat know if I took a personal student. Something about an investment paying off."

It wouldn't be enough for most others, but Shouta watched green eyes narrow, flailing hands briefly settling down as the kid focused. He also watched awareness flare and the hands go wild again, nearly hitting his amused mother in the arm.

"You mean Principal Nezu is my grand-Sensei?!"

Tsukauchi sighed, deeply, before ducking and accepting more Mochi from a giggling Inko.

Shouta just patted a flailing hand, watching as tumbling sunshine poured off the kid.

His kid.

(Shouta *wanted)*.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you for reading; all the support has been amazing!

I have a Dadzawa time travel started if you're looking for more before the sequel is up. We Go Together

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!